

Today's News - Wednesday, February 20, 2013

- Capps digs deep into the evolution of the Hirshhorn Bubble: "as a public-art stunt," it is "troubling," but the museum "should build it anyway" - DS+R "makes a good recession-era analog to Gehry...a playful, recessionary monument to making do."
- Kennicott responds to Capps, who "touches on some of the criticism leveled at the project and by extension at the Hirshhorn's director, Richard Koshalek. It's a risk, but not without rewards" (both are great reads!).
- Zellner espouses the value of fine-grain development for LA: "our large-scale urban redevelopment plans for old but demographically expanding cities like Los Angeles seem like ineffective and outmoded models."
- A University of Edinburgh professor of contemporary cultures bemoans his city suffering "a weird urban malaise" resulting in "a curious paralysis and a paradoxical sense of decline. That's fine for aesthetes in search of photogenic ruins."
- Las Vegas's old Sahara is in for a \$415 million rehab: "We are going back to the roots of Las Vegas.' Roots doesn't necessarily mean humble."
- Heller offers a most lively (and amusing) report on six developers vying to win the "Mr. Philly Casino pageant. It was a pitchfest on steroids."
- King cheers SWA's "nip-and-tuck" for Oakland's Jack London Square: "This isn't magic, just common sense. Too bad that in the life of American cities, common sense often is in short supply."
- Lewis offers a lesson for them all: "It's time to talk less about zoning restrictions and limits and more about visionary plans, urban design goals and architectural aspirations."
- 5468796 Architecture "brings drama to a frequently frozen main street" in Winnipeg: "We had to show that there is a new act for the old body."
- Betsky is more than a bit bothered by the renovation of Mies's Villa Tugendhat: it "brings the house back to its former glory, but the price is hollow authenticity - a picture-perfect facsimile" (great pix).
- Q&A with Elemental's Aravena re: his firm, its soon-to-be-completed housing in Constitución, Chile, and his stance on the role of architects in sheltering the world's expanding population.
- The AIA ABI "shows continued strength. We will still be watching to see if the upward swing in business continues. But the upward trends are hopeful."
- Early registration now open for International Making Cities Livable "European Cities of Vision" Study Tour.
- One we couldn't resist: eyefuls of a Brazilian street artist's tribute to Niemeyer covering the entire side of a São Paulo skyscraper (stunning!).

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The Hirshhorn's Bubble Bobble: As a public-art stunt, the Seasonal Inflatable is troubling. The Hirshhorn should build it anyway...Diller Scofidio + Renfro makes a good recession-era analog to Frank Gehry...if the Inflatable ultimately does serve a sophisticated educational purpose...then its existence truly would be seriously amazing...It is a playful, recessionary monument to making do. By Kriston Capps - Washington City Paper (Washington, DC)

In defense of the 'Hirshhorn bubble': ...the next few months critical for the fate of the Bloomberg Balloon...Capps's article touches on some of the criticism leveled at the project and by extension at the Hirshhorn's director, Richard Koshalek, who conjured the idea...It's a risk, but not without rewards...a relatively inexpensive way of attracting attention and...desire for some sizzle on the mall. By Philip Kennicott - Washington Post

Comment> Think Small: Peter Zellner espouses the value of fine-grain development for Los Angeles: LA remains disconnected, and its over-arching and under-addressed ethos of urban disengagement has yet to be adequately challenged...cities must develop organically...This approach imagines LA as a city of plurals, as a city of many Davids, not just Goliaths. -- Zellnerplus; Eric Owen Moss; Michael Maltzan - The Architect's Newspaper

Scotch This Plan: Scotland's decaying capital city shows why this country is not ready for independence...Edinburgh suffers a weird urban malaise...struggles with the past as much as it struggles with the future. The result is a curious paralysis and a paradoxical sense of decline. That's fine for aesthetes in search of photogenic ruins... By Richard J. Williams/University of Edinburgh - Foreign Policy magazine

An Oasis at the Sahara: ...SLS Las Vegas, a \$415 million rehab and construction project by Philippe Starck and Gensler for the Strip's neglected north end...remodeling of the hotel that served as the set for the 1960 film "Ocean's Eleven," the developers are working to play down expectations..."We are going back to the roots of Las Vegas." Roots doesn't necessarily mean humble... [image] - Architect Magazine

Philadelphia's would-be casino operators put on a show: ...the second coming of the city's second gambling emporium: six developers vying to win the golden license, sort of a Mr. Philly Casino pageant. If you have a weakness for hyperbole and neon...It was a pitchfest on steroids...Ken Goldenberg is the only developer who hired a top architectural firm, Enrique Norten's TEN Arquitectos... By Karen Heller - Philadelphia Inquirer

Giving Jack London Square a nip and tuck: A strange undercurrent of American urbanism is the belief in magic among the powers that be...When these leaps of faith fall short - as imitations often do - the damage can linger for decades. That's why Rene Bihan takes the long view...This isn't magic, just common sense. Too bad that in the life of American cities, common sense often is in short supply. By John King -- SWA Group; TS Studio [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

As land use planning changes, 'zoning' is no longer appropriate: 20th century term has increasingly become an obsolete characterization of how we plan and shape growth...It's time to talk less about zoning restrictions and limits and more about visionary plans, urban design goals and architectural aspirations. Roger K. Lewis - Washington Post

Avenue Building: The Box Outside: A revamped commercial building brings drama to a frequently frozen Winnipeg main street..."We had to show that there is a new act for the old body." -- 5468796 Architecture [slide show] - Architectural Record

Miesian Revival: The restoration of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1930 Villa Tugendhat in Brno, Czech Republic brings the house back to its former glory, but the price is hollow authenticity...what we are seeing is only a collection of remains woven together into a picture-perfect facsimile. By Aaron Betsky -- Gerrit Rietveld; Le Corbusier; Philip Johnson; Omnia Projekt [images] - Architect Magazine

Newsmaker: Alejandro Aravena: Elemental's executive director talks about the firm, its soon-to-be-completed housing in the Chilean city of Constitución, and his stance on the role of architects in sheltering the world's expanding population. [images] - Architectural Record

ABI Up for Sixth Straight Month: The AIA's Architecture Billings Index shows continued strength in the design and construction industry...We will still be watching to see if the upward swing in business continues...But the upward trends are hopeful. - Architect Magazine

2013 IMCL "European Cities of Vision" Study Tour: Freiburg and Strasbourg, September 27 -- October 4: the opportunity to visit and learn in depth about two of Europe's most livable and sustainable cities; early registration: May 1 - International Making Cities Livable (IMCL)

[Artist Eduardo Kobra Pays Honor to Oscar Niemeyer in São Paulo: Brazilian street artist and four other painters have been working...to complete a 52 meter high mural...Covering the entire side of a skyscraper... \[images\]](#)- [Huffington Post](#)

[How an Architect Stole the Stockholm Furniture Show: Gert Wingårdh's architectural folly proves the extraordinary power of architecture, even when a building lasts just four days. By Linda Hales \[images\]](#)- [ArchNewsNow](#)



- [I.M. Pei/Pei Partnership Architects: Bank of China Headquarters, Beijing, China](#)
- [Zaha Hadid Architects: Antwerp Port Authority Headquarters, Antwerp, Belgium](#)

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